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Cliftoniana);  
OR  
**STRAY THOUGHTS,**

*Collected for the Soiree, given by the Ladies of Clifton,*

IN AID OF ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH,

9th March, 1858.

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Proudly defiant old Niagara pours  
Her surging waters through the fearful chasm  
Of fretted rocks impassable,  
Or else; but through a power beyond the ken  
Or conjuration of the red man's medicine,  
His Sachems, or within  
The circle of his wild imaginings,  
Here, even here; and long with awe  
And thrilling wonder had the pale-face gaz'd,  
Dumb with confessional of impotence;  
Hence did the rank weeds and the tangled brake  
Of darkling shelter grow  
Noxiously luxuriant.  
Meet harbor, dark and dank,  
Abode of reptiles, venomous and vile.  
And scarcely now ten times have forests been  
Unclothed and bare, to wintry blasts expos'd;  
Since here—as in all places subject to  
The universal law of change,  
Imperative in nature's rule—  
Has change appear'd;  
And what a change!

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The white man, basking in the genial rays  
Of gospel light, learns that his origin  
Is more than earthly ;  
That his powers, expansive as eternity,  
Are limitless in the acquiring  
Of knowledge, and by knowledge, power.  
See here this power evinced—man's art  
The impossible achieves, and side by side;  
For human wonder,  
Man's genius manifest,  
With nature's handiwork ; magnificent !  
Sublime !

Where e'rst with solemn shade the towering trees,  
A forest temple for the feather'd tribes,  
Resounded with the melody of nature's gladness,  
Now tapering to the skies, amidst the busy strife  
Of civilized industry and commerce,  
Encompassed with the screeching engines,  
Loudly indicative  
Of haste, and bustle, and employment.  
The graceful steeple heavenward points,  
And tells of man's abstraction from  
The cares of time ; one day in seven  
To ponder on eternity,  
And meet in unison for prayer and praise,  
And lessoning in duty and obedience.  
Nor yet in vain appears the effort, thus  
To harmonize the various tendencies,  
And blend, for the grand end,  
Distinctions minor, nor essential.  
These while maintained, nor sought to be disturb'd,  
Together see denominational proclivities,  
Of race, or class, or creed arising,  
Here joyously assembled.

All hail ! my friends, my benison be on you,  
God bless this effort, its object and its end  
Bless, for future harmony in working.  
For each particular and for general good,

In concert of a common brotherhood,  
Of God's own children—  
Fair faces numerous surround me here,  
Set on fair forms of beauty,  
The radiant light of grace, benignity and zeal  
Beams from the Peerless eyes  
Of Clifton's Peerless Maidens !  
As present at this joyous feast, with Clifton's Matrons,  
At once their guides, their patterns, and exemplars,  
They join in concert with true hearts  
Of stalwart and industrious men ;  
For here, too, are in force assembl'd,  
Brave men and true, of energy and action,  
Providers and protectors, not surpass'd  
For industry and effort in the race  
Of life ; be it for purpose personal or for  
The common weal.  
Here come they and present themselves,—  
Laying aside their usual occupation,—  
To aid and countenance  
This Festival of charity and love ;  
Here congregated, too, benevolent and kind—  
Strangers appear, some far, some near,  
And some of other creeds political,  
The citizens of other rule :  
Yet though of different form and system  
The Government they own and prize,  
Still change aught else whate'er they may.  
The Anglo-Saxon heart, of purpose charitable,  
Responsive beats in sympathy and love  
To Anglo-Saxon need ;  
And hence they're here, and yet  
Perhaps an added cause, arising from  
The blood's admixture, of impetuosity  
And strife, on acquisition bent ;  
Restless, and curious, all curious sights  
And strange to witness, moves to share  
Our social glee ;  
Seizing so rich occasion, free to bask

In smiles from stately dames  
And maidens fair,  
Rich in Canadian healthiness and beauty,  
Or this, or that the cause, or both conjoined;  
Or whate'er else—we bid them welcome—  
The while to virtue and propriety to pay  
Your bounden homage, not forgetful,  
Nor ceasing, or in word, or look, or action  
To do them reverence.  
Let's all this feast of reason free partake,  
Let flow of soul gush streaming forth,  
The fleeting hours, big with enjoyment,  
Wait not, but court their occupation,  
Enjoy them then;—  
Let mirth and wit abound,  
Jocund and gay;—  
Be happy now, and happiness,  
Be yours for ayé.

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*City Steam Press, No. 63 Yonge Street, Toronto.*

PFB 21/29